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The Battlefield.

THE BATTLE-FIELD. ✻ ✻
BY DUFFIELD OSBORNE.

I stood in a shallow valley where the sun beat down upon the grass and flowers, for there were few trees; and the low hills that stretched along on either side, seemed to say:

"Yonder, between us, lies the trough where the demons that hate men, once battled."

And I looked again and beheld a great mound of earth; and I climbed it that I might the better perceive all things, and I read the inscription on the mound, and it said:

"Lo! I am piled by the descendants of those who did nothing, that I might commemorate the noble achievements of their ancestors."

And I spoke to the lion that lay upon the mound and said: "Were there not, then, great deeds done here?"

And the lion answered:

"Surely; but those need no commemoration. I and my mound immortalize the men

who fled, when the storm-clouds were smoke and the thunder and lightning came from mouths of iron."

And when I had pondered over this, it began to seem less strange and more nearly akin to the ways of men.

And I looked again upon the valley and upon the hills, and they were bright with flowers that were all red and blue—poppies and cornflowers; and I wondered at the colors of the flowers in that they were those of the coats worn by the men from whose dust they grew.

And the wind came down the valley, and the poppies and the cornflowers waved to and fro, and the sun began to sink.

Then it was that a strange thing happened; for, in the waning light of the tinted sky, the cornflowers waxed sombre and grey so that I scarce saw them among the grass, but the poppies blazed with a brighter red under the setting sun.

And a low voice seemed to rise up from the field of waving flowers, saying:

"Look at us well, for we are the spirits of slain men."

